

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD VIA POUCH

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0592

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS PFOR PINT UR

SUBJECT: PRAVDA STEPS UP ATTACK AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

1. SUMMARY: A LONG PRAVDA ARTICLE TAKES THE ANTI-SOLZHENITSYN CAMPAIGN A STEP FURTHER BY ATTACKING THE AUTHOR DIRECTLY AND IN EXTREMELY HARSH TERMS. THE TECHNIQUE OF REPRINTING FOREIGN COMMUNIST PRESS ATTACKS ON HIM ALSO CONTINUES. A SPEAKER AT A WELL-ATTENDED PUBLIC LECTURE TOOK QUESTIONS ON SOLZHENITSYN, REDICULED HIM AND SAKHAROV, AND SAID "THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE HEARD." EMBASSY SOURCES OVER THE WEEKEND GENERALLY FELT THAT PUNITIVE ACTION WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE TAKEN AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN. THE PRAVDA ARTICLE AND COMMENTS FROM LOCAL SOURCES RAISE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE AUTHORITIES MAY BE PLANNING MORE VIGOROUS PRESS ATTACKS AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN A LA SAKHAROV, ALTHOUGH THE DAMAGE TO THE

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SOVIET IMAGE ABROAD DURING THE SAKHAROV CAMPAIGN MAY BE A

RESTRAINING FACTOR. END SUMMARY

2. PRAVDA JANUARY 14 RAKES SOLZHENITSYN THOROUGHLY OVER THE COALS IN A LONG BACK-PAGE ARTICLE ENTITLED, "PATH OF BETRAYAL," SIGNED BY I. SOLOVYEV (VAGUELY DESCRIBED BY PRAVDA SOURCE AS "OCCASIONAL" WRITER ON LITERARY SUBJECTS BUT PRESUMED TO BE A PSEUDONYM). FULL TRANSLATION CARRIED BY TASS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE SERVICE SAME DAY. ARTICLE IS MOST DIRECT AND LENGTHY BLAST AT SOLZHENITSYN BY SOVIET PRESS WHICH HAD THUS FAR LIMITED ITSELF TO REPRINTING CRITICISM OF HIM BY FOREIGN COMMUNIST PAPERS.

3. ARTICLE IS EXPECTEDLY HARSH, DESCRIBING SOLZHENITSYN IN SUCH TERMS AS "IMMORAL," "LOATHSOME," "PROVOCATEUR," "SLANDERER," "INTERNAL EMIGREE," "RENEGADE" AND DEPICTING HIM AS SERVANT OF "REACTIONARY CIRCLES" IN WEST WHICH OPPOSE DETENTE. ARTICLE RIDICULES HIS IMAGE IN WESTERN PRESS AS A "MARTYR," MENTIONING HIS ALLEGED FINANCIAL ASSETS IN THE SOVIET UNION AND ABROAD. IT SCORNS HIS "VICIOUS FABRICATIONS" ABOUT "VIOLATIONS OF SOCIALIST LEGALITY CONNECTED WITH THE PERSONALITY CULT," WHICH, ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, HAVE ALREADY BEEN OPENLY DEALT WITH BY THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY.

4. SOLOVYEV DOES NOT DIRECTLY CALL FOR OFFICIAL ACTION AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN BUT STATES THAT HIS BEHAVIOR "INTOLERABLE" AND THAT HE SHOULD BE TREATED AS A "TRAITOR FROM WHOM ALL SOVIET WORKING PEOPLE, EVERY HONEST MAN, CANNOT BUT TURN AWAY IN ANGER AND DISGUST."

5. IZVESTIYA JANUARY 12 AND PRAVDA JANUARY 13 ALSO RAN BRIEF SUMMARIES OF FOREIGN COMMUNIST PRESS CRITICISM OF SOLZHENITSYN IN U.S., CANADA, EAST GERMANY, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BULGARIA. MAIN THRUST OF SUMMARIES IS THAT SOLZHENITSYN CONSCIOUSLY AIDS ENEMIES OF SOVIET UNION IN TRYING TO TORPEDO MOVEMENT TOWARD DETENTE.

6. SPEAKER AT PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS LECTURE JANUARY 13 RIDICULED SOLZHENITSYN AND SAKHAROV BEFORE AUDIENCE OF ABOUT 300, BUT LESS HARSHLY THAN SOLOVYEV. SOLZHENITSYN WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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SECOND MOST POPULAR SUBJECT OF QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD AT END OF LECTURE (WITH MIDEAST FIRST), BUT LECTURER GENERALLY MOUTHED VIEWS REPRINTED PREVIOUSLY IN SOVIET PRESS. ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE AUTHOR, LECTURER POINTED OUT THAT PRAVDA COMMENTATOR YURIY ZHUKOV HAD ALREADY RECEIVED 600 LETTERS CRITICIZING SOLZHENITSYN AND STATED ENIGMATICALLY THAT "THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE WILL BE HEARD."

7. EMBASSY SOURCES OVER THE WEEKEND (BEFORE PUBLICATION ON PRAVDA ARTICLE) SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN SOLZHENITSYN'S FATE THAN IN SUBSTANCE OF HIS NEW BOOK AND ATTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE IN THIS RESPECT TO WESTERN OPINION. A DISSIDENT ACADEMICIAN CLOSE TO SAKHAROV EXPRESSED VIEW THAT AUTHORITIES WOULD NOT TAKE MAJOR ACTION AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN. A JUNIOR STAFF MEMBER OF USA INSTITUTE STATED THAT HE WAS "NINETY PERCENT CERTAIN" THAT CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN WOULD BLOW OVER AS DID CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAKHAROV. A MATHEMATICIAN AND HIS HISTORIAN WIFE WERE SOMEWHAT MORE SKEPTICAL, SAYING THAT BECAUSE OF WORLD OPINION THE REGIME COULD HARDLY SEND SOLZHENITSYN TO A PRISON CAMP OR INTO EXILE, BUT THAT THERE WAS ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY THAT HE WOULD BE PUT ON A PLANE AND SENT OUT OF THE COUNTRY. A FEMALE LAWYER, WHOSE DAUGHTER ATTENDS THE SAME SPECIAL KINDERGARTEN AS SOLZHENITSYN'S SON, OPINED THAT THE WRITER'S LIFE WOULD BE MADE MORE DIFFICULT BUT THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD BE IMPRISONED. SOVIET GUESTS AT AN EMBOFF'S APARTMENT SAID THEY HAD HEARD VOA REPORTS ON SOLZHENITSYN AND KNEW ABOUT, WITHOUT HAVING HEARD, RADIO LIBERTY BROADCASTS OF TEXT OF HIS BOOK. THEY GAVE NO INDICATION OF INCREASED CONCERN ABOUT WORSENING OF LOCAL ATMOSPHERE AS A RESULT OF THE AFFAIR AND, IN FACT, ASKED FOR COPIES OF SOME OF HIS OTHER WORKS.

8. COMMENT: THE SOLOVYEV ARTICLE AND COMMENTS WE HAVE HEARD HERE MAY INDICATE THAT THE AUTHORITIES ARE PREPARING FOR AN ORGANIZED PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOLZHENITSYN A LA SAKHAROV. THEY PRESUMABLY WILL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE UNEXPECTED STORM THEY STIRRED IN THE WEST, AND THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE SOVIET IMAGE ABROAD BY THE ANTI-SAKHAROV CAMPAIGN.DUBS

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